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*Artistry and prestige.*

Nor will any two successive performances in a given village be quite alike. For, with the keen dramatic and artistic sense of the natives, for whom, in the Small Islands, the Maki affords the opportunity for endless display of every kind in the introduction of new songs, new dances, new improvements to old rites, it is a matter of moment that not only for artistic reasons but also for prestige and the eclipsing of rival villages; at least something new should always be added. The chief method by which this is achieved is in the number of valuable tusked boars, often amounting to several hundred, that will be sacrificed at one time. Details of such mass sacrifices will be found in the accounts given below.

"*Copyright*," *The Selling of Rites.*

The numbers of boars killed depends upon the will only of those who sacrifice. With regard to ritual, however, the matter stands on a very different footing. For no rite or sub-rite, no song once performed, no dance once it has been invented, much less any important aspect of ritual, may be taken on by one village from another without heavy payment. There is a system of unwritten copyright for everything. Nothing is given away. Thus, in other aspects of culture also, the minutest alteration in the style of carving a canoe figure-head, in the number of decorative sticks projecting from a house-gable, or in the fashioning of a club, the smallest improvement in ritual—all these, once made, must be paid for by anyone wishing to repeat them.

## INFLUENCE OF "COPYRIGHT" ON THE SLOW DIFFUSION OF CULTURE. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MAKI ON ATCHIN

This system of copyright is an important indication of the super-development of the commercial aspect of life in the whole group, not only with respect to material things, but also towards their ritual proceedings. It is also a fact of prime importance with regard to the diffusion of culture. My chief data regarding this were obtained on Atchin, and will be published in detail in a future volume. But I will anticipate this publication to emphasise a few points.

My evidence is based on extensive genealogies and on detailed accounts as to exactly what individuals were responsible for the introduction of the most important elements of the rite. These records go back for nineteen generations to the introduction of patrilineal descent into the island.[1] Before this time the chief monument to be erected was the single large dolmen, as in the earliest record on Vao; circle-tuskers were at that time unknown, and the highest grade of sacrificial pig was a re-entrant-tusker. At this time also the titles taken were LUWUSH, WEL-WEL and

[1] See pp. 17, 84.

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who excel in this, and who compose songs that sometimes come to them in dreams or else consciously during the day. This gift, like everything else in the Small Islands,[2] is commercialised. Songs are composed on request and duly charged for, and, if of a ritual nature, will thenceforth enjoy the same "copyright" protection as is afforded to all tangible and intangible elements of native culture. For ritual songs once sung become the property of those who first sing them, and may not be repeated by others without due payment.

*Structure of songs.*

The songs thus sung are all based on the pentatonic scale, but are by no means restricted to it, there being considerable modal variation and a very wide range, both in the character of the songs and in their compass, which sometimes extends (quite apart from the descant frequently sung by the women) to over an octave. Details of their very elaborate structure, together with the native terminology regarding it, will be given in a later volume dealing with music on Atchin, in the language of which island the terms were recorded. As a general description it is enough to say here that each song as a rule begins with a refrain consisting in the Small Islands of the tune sung with a series of nasalised vowels,[1] which is called the "leaf." This is then followed by a verse, sung to the same tune, which is called the "fruit." Verse and refrain then repeat and alternate with one another in patterns differing for the different types of song.[3] Sometimes the leader sings alone, and sometimes the chorus. It is characteristic of all native songs that they always end on a weak note. Accordingly, no song ever ends at the end of a verse, the end coming at the beginning of a repetition of the refrain, which is then cut short by cries of specified types in which leader and chorus usually alternate with one another, and, if the song is accompanied by gongs, by a heightened speed in the rhythm followed by a sudden and dramatic stop.

*Great number of songs, and occasions on which sung.*

There is an immense number of such songs. There are, to begin with, the ritual cycles connected with all-night dances, during which the same song must not be repeated twice.[3] As each song, together with repeats and intervals, takes on an average not more than ten minutes, this means that at least 70 songs must be sung in a single night. There are several of

[1] In other parts of Malekula, such as South-West Bay, the refrain consists of vowels preceded by the consonants *w* and *l*.

[2] Since I did not make a special study of songs on Vao, those recorded in this volume contain only the verse. Examples from other islands, including the refrain, will be given in later volumes.

[3] Cf. Deacon, 4, p. 363, reporting from Lambumbu that "if possible, a song is not sung twice on the same night."

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lateral struts in turn support horizontal wooden purlins called *wōbu* (apparently a modified form of the word *wombat*, used for ridge-pole), which are wrapped round with cycas leaves (*ro mel*) [1] kept in place and hidden from view by a serving of plaited coconut sinnet (*na-wūn*) [2] wound round each purlin for the whole of its length.[3] The process of serving the purlins is called *ra to-to ghore wōbu*.

Reaching from the ridge-pole to the ground, and supported a third of the way up by the wooden purlins, are the numerous bamboo rafters (*na-ras*), to the interior aspect of which subsidiary bamboo purlins (*kara-kara*) are lashed to keep them more securely in place. The rafters in turn support the thatch, previously prepared by the women in panels about four feet long and three feet deep made by bending quantities of thatch-palm leaves (*ni-at*) over canes of a kind called *ne-limbe rārāh* and pinning them together by means of short lengths of split bamboo called *ne-wirōh*. These canes supporting the thatch-panels are lashed to the rafters in tiers, at intervals of a few inches, so that the leaves of each panel overlap many others, thus forming a thick layer of thatch (*ni-at*) which effectively keeps out the most torrential rains. The front and rear ends of the thatch are neatly rendered by means of further split bamboos pinning the overlapping panels together, a process called *ra wirōh tāre*, "we pin them strongly." At the apex of the roof, where the two sets of panels join, is placed a coping made out of pieces of old canoes, turned upside down to keep out the rain. This coping is called *tambu rōini*.

At ground-level the rain is further kept out by raising the earthen floor of the *ghamal* about six inches or a foot above the level of the ground outside, done after the erection of the centre-posts and struts, but before the placing of the rafters.

When the roof is in place, a low interior side-wall, not more than two feet high, is constructed of horizontal bamboos along each side of the *ghamal* to cut off the angle formed by the roof where it touches the ground to keep out the draught and to provide a finish to the space within. An optionable feature of these side-walls (the right to include which must be paid for to some previous "owner") is that they may, as in the existing *ghamal* at Pete-hul, be made to curve inward at both ends in the manner called *e mbere*, meaning "it curves." A yet further embellishment (the right to use which must also be bought) consists in covering the ends of the purlins, where the side-walls curve round, with split bamboos inserted under the lashing of coconut sinnet and projecting slightly, thus giving a delicately shining appearance to the ends.

The main features of this building are similar, though on a much

[1] *ro* = leaf; *mel* = cycas.
[2] All major lashings in house construction are made of coconut sinnet.
[3] I do not know whether the cycas wrapping is to make them sacred, or immune from the effects of the damp atmosphere, or both.